DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 289 UD 015 818

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TITLE Educational Implications of Language Diversity: A Consideration of Black English Vernacular.
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 71p.; Completed for requirements of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Distinctive Features; Educational Planning; *Educational Policy; Educational Practice; Language Patterns; *Language Role; Language Skills; *Language Styles; Language Variation; *Linguistic Competence; Linguistic Difficulty (Inherent); Linguistic Performance; Minority Group Children; Models; *Negro Dialects; Second Languages; Social Dialects; Sociolinguistics; Urban Language

ABSTRACT

An exploration of issues in language diversity addressing the nature of dialect, features of the dialect, features of black English Vernacular (BEV), linguistic phenomena in the black urban community, theories of the origins of BEV, and its social, economic, and political ramifications suggest that BEV, like other dialects, meets the needs of its users and that BEV speaking children are able to express cognitive processes adequately in their dialect. Educational solutions to reading problems espoused by those grounded in the diversity model are given in terms of linguistic factors. Investigators who focus on deficiency models furnish solutions which range from providing alternate forms of learning geared to a group's supposed area of cognitive strength, to removing the child from his environment. Integrated schooling, intensive training in Standard English before beginning to learn to read, and pre-school programs are also suggested. Solutions for teaching reading and language in inner cities espoused by diversity proponents include the initial use of logograms for syllables, the acceptance of dialect involved miscues for standard forms, the avoidance of the principal sources of dialect interference, and the use of beginning-to-read materials in dialect. This study advocates the use of a child's idiolect or characteristic speech patterns to formulate his own reading materials. (Author/AM)

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ED120289

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF LANGUAGE DIVERSITY:

A consideration of Black English Vernacular

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This paper was awarded special citation in a competition held by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, funded by the National Institute of Education, to identify promising graduate student work, not yet widely known, that can make a contribution to the theory and practice of urban education.

INTRODUCTION

Many thoughtful people have a grave concern for the learning-to-read crisis in the urban school. The phenomenon of a white, middle class exodus from the American city has resulted in a high concentration of black and Spanish speaking people who remain in the inner city. The children of these urban communities are failing to read at expected norms of reading achievement and are lagging farther and farther behind as they advance through the school grades. The Coleman Report (Coleman, 1966) states that the following was true in 1966: "In the metropolitan northeast, Negro students on the average begin the first grade with somewhat lower scores on standard achievement tests than whites, are about 1.6 grades behind by sixth grade, and have fallen 3.3 grades behind white students by twelfth grade." In 1972 (N.Y.S. Ed. Dept. 1973) 42 percent of the school population of New York City in third grade scored below the statewide reference point in reading achievement. An enormous effort needs to be made to reverse the trend indicated by the State Education Department figures.

The social consequences of reading failure deserve attention. Individuals who are partially illiterate are likely to have difficulty in a technology that generates fewer manual jobs and more jobs that require literacy. Individuals who are partially illiterate may not be able to

function in a society which requires everyone to read in order to fill out numerous required forms. Individuals who are partially illiterate may absorb much information from listening, but they are cut off from vast opportunities for learning which require reading ability.

Those investigators who are interested in the etiology of urban reading difficulties have focused their efforts in two directions: 1. The pathology direction. The urban child is deficient as a result of genetic or environmental causation. 2. The "different" direction. The urban child is different, principally in his orientation toward language.

Educational solutions proposed in the literature are based in either of the preceding viewpoints. Those grounded in the "deficiency" model propose solutions which range from providing alternate forms of learning geared to a group's supposed area of cognitive strength, to removing the child from his environment, to modification of maternal teaching style, to compensation for learning readiness deficits through pre-school programs, to television readiness teaching, to improving educational quality and up-grading expectations for achievement, to integrated schooling, to intensive training in Standard English before beginning to learn to read.

Those grounded in the "different" model generally look to linguistic solutions for reading problems. Some favor the use of beginning reading material written in dialect to avoid linguistic mismatch; others advise that dialect based oral reading miscues be considered appropriate renditions of standard language, and still others propose that a morphology and syntax that bypasses specific linguistic differences be used. This study advocates an approach, language-experience, that utilizes a child's natural language for the writing of his/her beginning-to-read stories.

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Much attention in current literature has been directed toward language diversity and toward analyses of black speech patterns to locate differences which have social and educational implications. The in-depth studies of Shuy (1968) and Labov (1972a) revealed that children who live in a Black English Vernacular speaking environment are extremely verbal and that their dialect is capable of expressing all logical operations.

Black English Vernacular is the socially stratifying speech pattern of the black lower class ghetto dwellers in the large urban centers. An analysis of its syntax is

now available as a result of research by linguists. Most researchers who propose that BEV is a sophisticated language form are linguists or linguistically oriented. They agree with Wolfram (1973) that "empirical evidence suggests that all languages are capable of conceptualization and expressing logical operations . . . . all languages and dialects are adequate as communication systems . . . . all languages are systematic and ordered." (Dillard 1972, p. 96) Black English Vernacular is viewed as a vehicle for encoding and not a symbol of cultural deficit. One of its features is a missing copula form. "He is home" becomes "He home." It has never been suggested that Russian or Hebrew be stigmatized because they have the same construction. Petterson (1972) cautioned that difference in word usage is based in the social situation. Baratz and Baratz (1970) attack what they call the social pathology model on the basis that there is no reason to believe that absence of false language and other norms render a child ineducable.

The research finding that black welfare children responded with the same syntactic forms as middle class children, (Salzinger, Salzinger and Hobson 1967) but were unable to mimic inflectual patterns differed from Baratz' findings. (1969) She discovered that the black subject's native code interfered when he was asked to repeat standard sentences; and that the white child's native code interfered when he was asked to repeat non-standard sentences. This

highlighting of the difficulty of code switching has profound implications for language learning.

Two 13 year old black gang members in New York City were asked to repeat sentences in Labov's study. (1972b) The following is an excerpt:

> Model by Interviewer: Nobody ever sat at any of those desks, anyhow.
>
> Boot: Nobody never sa - no whitey never sat at any o' tho' dess, anyhow.
>
> (Labov 1972, pp. 227-228)

The field worker repeated the original sentence and the informant made several additional attempts to switch the code. He was unable to do so. However, informants translated the deep structure of the sentences into familiar dialect--a high-level cognitive act. A field worker's discussion with Larry, a loud and rough member of the Jets, revealed a complex set of interdependent propositions in Black English Vernacular. This is the abstract reasoning that Bernstein (1970) thought could only function within elaborated language patterns. It is but one case in Labov's prodigious research into the language patterns of New York City residents.

Based on work with 700 people in Detroit, Shuy (1968) concluded that social dialect has structure adequate to the needs of its users; its phonology, syntax and lexi-

con are indices of social stratification; and it has a social function for its user in his social milieu.

A striking example of the shortcoming of most verbal interchanges used to analyze language patterns is reported by Labov. (1970b) A skilled and friendly interviewer elicited minimal response from an eight year old ghetto resident. On another attempt when potato chips were offered and the boy's best friend participated, when the interviewer sat on the floor with the boys and taboo words were used to start the conversation, there was a flood of verbosity. Labov observed that New York City ghetto street life furnishes a "bath" of verbal stimulation for a child. Many of the most popular games - singing, sounding, toasts, rifting, and louding - depend on verbal competition. Younger children watch from the sidelines trying to master the skills of the older children. A view of the child in his sociolinguistic community gives a far different insight into his linguistic abilities from the view of a child in a testing situation. If a child's language production is so fluent in non-Standard English, Labov sees no obstacle to learning. Cazden (July, 1966) posited that it might be the school setting that is providing the interference.

A coincidental event furnished William Stewart (1969) with insight into the needs of Black English speakers. A non-reader found one of his Black English translations of "A Visit from St. Nicholas." She was able to read it with no difficulty. When she attempted the standard version, her problems reappeared. This is an intriguing incident, but it is necessary to have much more evidence on which to base conclusions.

Many misconceptions about the linguistic competence of the user of Black English Vernacular have developed because the evaluator analyzed a speech sample taken under inhibiting circumstances. A subject's knowledge that his dialect may have a stigmatizing effect on an examiner can further influence the results. When normal children are free to use their own language patterns in a non-restrictive setting, they produce a quantity and quality that would surprise some test administrators. It is unlike the linguistically deficient model constructed by Bernstein (1970) and Bereiter (1966).

Continued exploration of the "different" hypothesis leads to a review of the nature of dialect and a delineation of the features of the dialect, Black English Vernacular; a discussion of BEV as a phenomenon in the

black urban community; theories of its origin; its social and political ramifications.

Definition of Dialect in Relation to Black English Vernacular

The study of Black English as a language system has been a relatively recent development. Linguists have called it Black English, Non-Standard English, Afro-American Dialect, Black English Vernacular, Basilect, etc.

A review of numerous definitions of dialect reveals that many can be applied to Black English Vernacular. Shuy (1970a) calls dialect, "A variety of a language that meets the needs of the speaker's community." Malstrom (1963) amplifies this to include differences vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. It is close to its neighboring dialect to be understood by membe of the neighboring dialect. The awareness of a systematic variation in speech can be correlated to class, age, sex and contextual style. McDavid (1969) calls it a variety of language intelligible to other speakers of the language set off by a unique complex of features of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Dillard (1972) calls it a speech

pattern of a number of individuals whose language is similar in some significant way. It is a "mother tongue," a means of identification with a community. These definitions would gain scope and precision with an addition indicating that a dialect may contain differences from its neighboring dialect in one or more of its constituent areas - phonology, morphology, syntax or lexicon.

Some speakers of the standard dialect make the mistake of considering the language spoken in the urban ghetto a slang variety of English. While it contains slang, dialect is not generated intentionally; slang often is. The dialect speaker does not identify differences; the slang user does. Dialect changes slowly; slang, quickly. Slang is lexically colorful and picturesque. Those who use it when it is at the beginning of its vogue consider themselves "au courant." When it begins to fade, people with a taste for its style drop it. Widespread adoption destroys its power to indicate rebellion, shock gentility, and indicate self assertiveness.(Mencken 1928) Its use within a group gives a feeling of group identity and separation. Much slang is dropped by its initiating

group when it invades the community at large; some is strong enough to maintain its hold. The expression "man" is one that is still very much alive in Black English after having spread to a larger community. When the expression is considered in sociolinguistic terms, it can be hypothesized that it expresses the black's assertion of manhood in the face of assaults from the dominant groups. The same may be said for Puerto Rican groups. During a television interview with members of a male Puerto Rican street gang in New York City, the word "man" was inserted into almost every sentence. (Interview, "Today Show," December 5, 1973) The word "cool" meaning great, fine, excellent, also retains its popularity among ghetto blacks as well as the community at large. It is now included in the Random House Unabridged Dictionary. Black Jazz has made many contributions to popular usage. One very notable one is "jive"; it now means "to fool or kid someone," "unintelligible, meaningless or deceptive talk." (Random Unabridged) The black connotation expands to include a certain amount of kinesic as well as linguistic information.

The following is a group of Black slang expressions and words that all illustrate the principle that

slang is closely related to the conventional word:

(Smith 1973, p. 41)

Expressions	Translations
Ain't it funky now.	It is a good situation.
He's bogarting.	He's using force.
It's ass-kicking time.	It's time to fight.
We had to haul ass.	We had to run.
Check it out.	See if it's right.

Words	Translations
Hype	Steal
Bitch	To argue
Mean	Really good looking
Mellow	Delightful
A.P.T.	African People's Time
Set	Party
Split	To leave
Wheels	Car

Another interesting group of expressions are included in Vetter's (1969) discussion. In order to distinguish slang from dialect, he adds the dialect variant:

Standard	Dialect	Slang
He didn't like his clothes.	He ayn lakh his clothes.	He din dig his vines.
She's a pretty girl.	She a pretty gel.	She a mean chick.[3]

Although purists are likely to argue the point, Black Slang has contributed to the expressive range of current American idiom. What other expression has the vigorous impact of "smart ass"!

Black English Vernacular conforms to the definitions of dialect in that it meets the needs of its users and differs from its neighboring dialects in one or more of its constituent areas--phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. Its lexical component, slang, is an unstable linguistic feature. Its syntax, phonology and morphology is more stable. An explanation of its features follows.

Features of Black English Vernacular

Dillard tells us that Black English is spoken by 80 percent of blacks, especially in city ghettos. (1972) It is most prevalent among the youngest group, there being a tendency to "age-grade." That is, as children progress through school, they eliminate some of its features, suggesting that some modeling takes place.

Syntax and Morphology. Black English differs from Standard English structure. Wolfram, (1973) as contrasted to Dillard, believes differences between BEV and SE are confined to surface structure. An example of the surface structural variation that Wolfram refers to is the lack of the possessive morpheme in the phrase, "John cousin." The speaker's intention is a demonstration of possession, as is the intention of the speaker who utters, "John's cousin." Dillard feels that the

durative "be" which denotes a progressive action is a semantic, deep structural variant. An example of this form is, "I be sleeping when he came." This is more than a substitution for the past tense "was" form. It denotes a continuing action which began some time in the past and may or may not continue through the present. This writer observes that, although it is not altogether analogous, it has some similarity to the French imperfect tense.

Other examples of common forms include the zero copula or linking verb as illustrated in, "She lazy"; the non-redundant plural, "forty year"; lack of third person verb-subject agreement, "John live in New York."

As comparisons are made, one must be careful to remember that similarities out-number differences. Linguists Dillard, (1972) Shuy, (1970) Wolfram, (1973) Labov, (1972a) Baratz (1969) and Vetter (1969) have analyzed the syntax of Black English Vernacular. All based their conclusions on samples. The following chart is an amalgam of its salient features:

TABLE 1

Variable	Standard English	Black English
Zero Possessive Morpheme	John's cousin.	John cousin.
Lack of 3rd Pers. Subj.-Verb Agreement	John lives in New York.	John live in New York.
Verb Form	I drank the milk.	I drunk the milk.
Subject expression	John lives in New York.	John he live in New York.
Future Form	I will go home.	I'ma go home.
Indefinite article	I want an apple.	I want a apple.
Pronoun Form	We have to do it. His book.	Us got to do it. He book.
Preposition	He is over at his friend's house.	He over to his friend house.
Do	No he isn't.	No he don't.
Pronouns, who and what	My sister, who lives in Georgia --	My sister, what lives in Georgia --

Continued

Table 1 continued

Variable	Standard English	Black English
Perfective Pre-verbal	I have gone.	I done gone.
Non-redundant plural	Forty years.	Forty year.
Zero copula, or linking verb	She is lazy.	She lazy.
Clause patterns - Zero pronoun connectors, that, who.	He has a gun that sounds like a bee.	He got a gun sound like a bee.
Zero "if" construction	I don't know if he can go.	I don' know can he go.
Non-redundant tense marking - not obligatory	The boy carried the log and dropped it and ran to his dog.	The boy carry the log and dropped it and run to his dog.
Progressive action durative "be"	He wasn't going all along. You make sense, but you haven't made sense right along.	He don' be goin'. You makin' sense, but you don't be making sense.
Deletion instead of contraction	They're mine.	They mine.

Continued

Table 1 continued

Variable	Standard English	Black English
Negative concord or double negation	He doesn't know anything.	He don't know nothing. (Also appears in non-standard white dialect.)

Language has an important function in the urban ghetto setting. Children play many games which are language competitions. Among them are some called singing, sounding, toasts, rifting, louding. Abrahams (1970) relates the high prestige factor that accrues from the effective use of words. In the black expressive system, life is viewed as a performance and high value is placed on language performance. The "Theater of Life" is not the province of blacks alone. Goffman in The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life (1959) offers a convincing theory that all of us perform in order to regulate our audiences. Dillard mentions a penchant for hypercorrection and fancy talk that is involved with the presentation of the self in black society. It stems from a tradition he calls "elegantizing." It is possible that internalization of social stigma has stimulated some blacks to "over react" linguistically.

Another phenomenon is that of dialect switching--changing to another form to meet the needs of a situation. A teacher at Philip Schuyler High School in Albany mentioned that she could understand her students, but not when they talked with each other. A standard speaking, educated, young black informant who was studying at RPI mentioned that he was able to speak a variety

of Black English that would make him feel comfortable in the appropriate setting. This phenomenon compares to the speech switching of the college educated immigrant offspring who returns to his ethnic home and neighborhood. It underscores the importance of the physical setting of a speech event.

The BEV heard in the black urban ghetto meets the needs of its users. It is the end product of several linguistic phenomena, some of which are: dialect swamping, differentiation according to age and sex, the prestige which accrues from various forms of linguistic display, and dialect switching.

Lexicon. Black English also differs in phonology, intonation, and lexicon. Lexicon, in the form of ethnic slang, especially that associated with black music, finds its way into Standard English. Common examples are such words as jive, swing, cool, cats, etc. Jazz musicians coin new uses as "in group" markers. When the word gains wide acceptance, they become cynical about its usage. An example is the word "hep." Self-respecting jazz musicians changed to "hip" when everyone adopted "hep." As "hip" became more popular musicians reverted to "hep." (Hinton 1958) Some phonological variables

follow: (Vetter 1969)

Phonology.

1. Reduction of final consonant cluster:

SE	BEV
bold	bol
bold one	bol one

Standard speakers often delete the final consonant, but never do so when the following word begins with a vowel.

2. Richness of vowel sound:

SE	BEV
ain't	ayn

3. Nasalization of some vowels to the extent that the following consonant is dropped.

SE	BEV
don't	don'

4. More relaxed pronunciation of nearly all consonants.

SE	BEV
Are	Ah

There is a lilt and stress that contributes to an overall effect of softness and lushness. There is also a wide vocal range.

In summary, BEV differs from SE in syntax, phonology, morphology and lexicon. Although its

differences occur principally in surface structure, there are some deep structural variants. It is used by blacks who live in social isolation in large urban ghettos.

Linguistic Phenomena in the Black Urban Community

Objective linguists view BEV as a separate system contiguous to the standard system. It effectively meets the needs of its users. It is able to perform the functions of any language. However, the dominant culture views it as a socially subordinate language form that is inadequate.

Today's Black English, or Basilect, is derived from and contains some trace of Creole, the dialect spoken by southern black slaves. (Stewart 1970) It is this dialect, with some variation, that is spoken in the ghettos of all large American cities largely as a result of south Atlantic and gulf state migration. Large amounts of immigration produce a condition called "dialect swamping," the older residents begin to adopt some of the characteristics of the newly arrived groups. This appears to be an anachronism, as the newly arrived group usually has the least status. Stewart studied this effect in Washington, D.C., which is a large center for uneducated

southern blacks mixed with northern, educated black professionals and government workers. Labov (1972b) observed that in the merger of northern and southern speech, some southern features are eliminated so that a new arrival is marked.

Just as within almost any designated group, within the lower class black urban community there is often a difference in the way the men and women, young and old talk. Women traditionally have spoken a dialect closer to standard. The historical position of many black women as domestics has been one that interfaces the two cultures and induces a linguistic result. Woman's talk is often characterized as "sweet talk." It is a symbol of the home and respectability. "Man talk" symbolizes defiant strength and maximizes the difference between it and "sweet talk." Older people are more likely to speak a variety closer to standard than the younger people who are more devoted to "jive" talk. Labov (1966) agreed that young informants leaned toward southern characteristics in their casual style. This might have been an outgrowth of language swamping.

Theories of the Origins of Black English Vernacular

Many Americans have regarded the black dialect as inferior, a social marker, or indicative of the speaker's inferior cognitive abilities. The literature reveals that theories of its genesis fall into four categories.

1) One is that its roots are in the speech of the people of East Anglia in England. The southern speech pattern bears certain resemblances to syntactic features of speakers in East Anglia and other sections of the British Isles. Among them are, dropping the morpheme -s (East Anglia), the durative be--"he be going every day" (Anglo-Irish), and preverbal done--"he done gone" (Scottish). (Dillard 1972) Dialect scholars had been very much involved with language patterns derived from those of the British Isles and concerned with the geography of dialects. The reasoning was that the blacks who were brought as slaves adopted a less desirable form of the East Anglia derived dialect. It certainly could not be claimed that many blacks originated in East Anglia. Whites in the southern United States did not perpetuate these patterns, but according to the theory blacks retained their archaic features. One Scottish informant[1] reported that certain

sections of Scotland use /goan/ for /going/. (This is not regarded as a consonant reduction, rather the /g/ is regarded as a consonant addition.) This is the kind of evidence used to relate BE to origins in the British Isles. One of the problems involved with such theorizing is that generalizations are made on the basis of an insufficient number of examples. It is a white-centered interpretation of language history.

2) Another theory based in a white-centered view is the notion that Negro dialect was formulated by song writers for minstrel shows. (Mencken 1928) The use of dialect in literary work was also attributed to the writer's linguistic creativity. This is obviously an untenable argument for it leads to the inevitable conclusion that Blacks who attended the minstrel shows and read the books modelled their dialect accordingly.

3) A thoroughly racist interpretation of the origins of black speech is the one that attributes black dialect to black physiognomy. Thick lips make the pronunciation lazy and the broad nose changes the vocal quality. Ambrose Gonzales (1922) made the classic statement: "Negroes took English and wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and . . .

it issued through their flat noses and thick lips." Ear, nose and throat specialists note that the only credence that can be given this theory is that nasal structure can provide a bit more resonance. Certainly the perfect Standard English spoken by so many educated blacks makes this notion one that can easily be relegated to the garbage can of useless ideas.

4) Not until the 1960's was major attention given to the African origins of Black English. Dillard, (1972) Vetter, (1969) Stewart, (1970) and Wolfram (1969) are in agreement that it has strong roots in West African colonialism and slave trading. Vetter notes that its phonology is similar to Bantu. All of them agree that it is a viable language system and effective for its users. Wolfram, among others, makes the interesting observation that a middle-class white might find himself verbally inadequate in some black language environments. Linguistic ethnocentrism is at the core of the view that a socially subordinate language form is inadequate.

Native populations in many parts of the world needed to be able to speak a language that would communicate with their colonizers. Pidgin developed as a simplified version of the colonizers' language. In the early stages

of the slave trade, traders mixed their cargo of slaves linguistically so that they could control them more easily. As a result, the slaves began to use a Pidgin so that they could communicate with each other. According to Dillard (1972, p. 22) English began to develop in the slave factories. Dillard refers to a 1594 Portuguese text (ibid., p. 368) which mentioned the use of English on the African west coast. Gullah, a language spoken in the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina retains the archaic form ascribed to the early plantation Creole and, as such, offers an interesting study for the linguist. Bailey (1971) observes that the Pidgin of the old world and the Creoles of the new world, which developed from a universal trade language, had similar verb systems. Pidgin has contributed the words "banana" and "goober" to general usage, as well as other borrowings.

Linguists theorized that when the slaves arrived in the United States, the original Pidgin became a language of wider communication, a Creole in a "dialect leveling" process, the residents of the new area absorbed some of the patterns of others already living in the area. Another linguistic influence at that time was the fact that blacks from many parts of Africa were thrown together in the

United States and needed a language to help them communicate.

It is of interest to note that during slavery, southern youngsters spoke a Gullah type dialect with their slave playmates and possibly with their "Mammies." As they grew older, they needed to be educated away from it if their speech were to signify the prestige status. Since white girls received less education, their adult speech retained more of its former characteristics. There were many reports of southerners who lapsed into stronger dialect when excited and in less linguistic control. This mix, combined with leveling, may account for today's southern dialect.

Among the existing theories of the origin of Black English Vernacular; archaic European roots, minstrel shows, effects of physiognomy on language production, and African roots; the one that proposes an African genesis seems to have the most validity.

Sociolinguistic View of Dialect

Many linguists have considered historical implications in the framework of the modern society. They have developed "sociolinguistic" points of view. A focus on

social context reveals that some dialects are more socially stratifying than others. It is the sociolinguistic approach Fishman (1970) favors when he says, "Descriptive sociolinguistics is a description of the normative pattern of language use within a speech community so as to show the systematic nature of a speech variety." Shuy (1970) adds that there is a relationship of language to geography, social status, sex, age, race, psychology and pedagogy.

It is important to consider the social setting further. Isolation of minority groups breeds linguistic difference. The majority that requires the normative language is the same majority that promotes linguistic difference through social segregation. The majority, in effect, is creating a double-bind for the minority group.

The rules of the dialect which constitute a system that transmits the speaker's deep meaning are described by linguists. They propose that all language systems are capable of expressing abstract thought; none are judged inferior. Labov's claim (1970a) that working class speech is well formed; that the majority of its utterances are complete sentences; that the rest can be transformed by editing rules; can apply to many varieties of dialect. He prefers it to the stream of language at learned conferences where the speakers "bury with words" and "words

take the place of thought." (Labov 1970, p. 19) His criticism is directed at the abuse of a language system, not at the system itself.

Acrolect and Basilect. The standard speech form or prestigious dialect is called "acrolect" (acro-apex) by Stewart. (1964) It is a socially unmarked variety of American English used as a reference point in school language instruction. It increases the individual's repertoire of socially important and useful ways to communicate. This variety of American English is often heard in network radio and TV newscasts. Fries views it as a social marker when he calls it "The particular type of English which is used in the conduct of important affairs of our people. It is also the type of English used by the socially acceptable of most of our communities; and, insofar as that is true, it has become a social or class dialect in the United States." Basilect (basi-bottom), (Stewart 1964) the least prestigious dialect, referred to as Black English Vernacular or BEV, occupies the other pole. Its most significant feature is its syntactic difference, but it differs to some extent in other respects--phonology, morphology and lexicon. An example of a syntactic transformation would be: Basilect or BEV--"See can he go" for SE "See if he can

go." BEV has a rule that, in a negative sentence with an indefinite, you may add a negative to every succeeding indefinite. "We ain't never had no trouble about none of us pullin out no knife or nothin." (Wolfram 1969) It might be a surprise to some to learn that Spanish, Italian and French contain similar constructions. In French it is the ne . . . ni . . . ni . . . construction.

The low prestige dialect has a limited number of features alien to the prestige dialect. Stewart says that the black non-standard form is more closely related to the standard form than a foreign language is, but that it occupies a socially inferior position. (1964) This near identity is crucial to the speaker, the listener and the teacher, for they consider the dialects to be more alike than they really are. It is at the crux of many language learning difficulties and will receive more attention later in this discussion.

The sociolinguistic point of view considers all forms of dialect adequate for the needs of the user. It is concerned with the interaction of society and language. Social stratification is a strong component of this interaction.

Dialect and Social Stratification

The question of class marking has far-reaching social consequence among whites as well as blacks. The town of Closter, New Jersey, is singled out by Labov (1966) to illustrate the stigma that the characteristic New York City /r/ reduction carries. His investigation revealed that this language pattern existed only among the working class residents of this suburb of New York City.

There are wide variations in the speech of blacks. Middle class and educated blacks in the north generally speak an unmarked standard dialect. Wolfram noted a sharp stratification of groups in relation to grammatical variables. Labov found that multiple negation differentiated class dramatically among both blacks and whites. Wolfram's analysis of the reduction of the consonant cluster at the end of words, BEV - goin, bes, SE - going, best, indicated it to be less stigmatizing when the following word began with a consonant than when the following word began with a vowel. Careful listening will reveal that many speakers of standard dialect reduce the consonant when saying "bes game"; but not, "bes apple."

Labov (1970) found that lower middle class speakers reacted most sharply to stigmatizing speech of others, that their less accurate self-reporting was a measure of linguistic insecurity. Shuy (1969) found upper class informants were more able to identify status from speech samples. Regardless of who could do it more easily, the evidence clearly indicates that people are very aware of the relationship of class to speech.

In a Canadian study, Lambert, et al., found that both English and French speaking subjects showed more favorable reactions to members of the prestige linguistic group, English, particularly in regard to the traits necessary for social and economic success. (Lambert, et al. 1972)

Is the notion that Standard English is a requirement for upward mobility a valid one? When Zale (1972) mentions that it is needed in education, business and professions; when Vetter (1969) claims that BEV limits opportunity; when Entwisle (1970) says that life chances may be shaped by the ten to fifteen second speech sample that is sufficient to make reliable judgments; do they take a defensible position? Or are they perpetuating a myth?

Shuy (1970b) polled sixteen employers to find that they considered a highly acceptable standard of speech directly proportionate to employability. Hopper et al. (1972) played taped interviews to prospective employers who made employment decisions. They found that speech characteristics were important when hiring for higher job categories, but not for manual labor. This kind of research may partially answer the need Labov (1964) expressed when he said that research was needed into which markers of language behavior had serious effects on a person's life chances. Linguistic sign equipment is involved with the personal performance that Goffman (1959) described as a favorable social style for upward mobility.

Not all feel that language alone is sufficient for passage to the American mainstream. O'Neill (1972) criticized imposing middle class speech standards on blacks on the basis that it is a false promise--it doesn't solve the injustice of American political and economic life. Sledd stated in Doublespeak that "pigmentation is more important than pronunciation" (Sledd 1972, p. 455) He continued by saying that society uses language to control and that we must end the isolation of "sub-standard" speakers. Although the reader may be somewhat

distracted by his penchant for "turning a phrase," his plea is basically for an acceptance of non-standard speech. In scrutinizing the desirability of adopting the dialect of the high culture, Labov (1972a) felt that the switcher, who shed his linguistic culture, paid too high a social and psychological price. He implies that what he left behind was inferior; that he has tailored his person to suit the needs of the market place. Lambert's research (1972) with English subjects who switched completely to a French linguistic system revealed that feelings of anomie began to surface.

Linguistic decisions confront those who wish to be upwardly mobile. In order to take advantage of opening opportunities for blacks in middle management and the professions, language conformity is essential. If a black opts for a life totally within the confines of the black community, the issue is not as crucial. To date, the artist is the only one who does not suffer this constriction.

If, by some unforeseen circumstance, there should be a change in social climate, the issue might resolve itself. Fishman (1970) described the change in status of the French language in Canada. When the

French Canadian elite formed its own enterprise structure in which English was superfluous, the French language became more prestigious. For those who need to live in the United States now, Shuy's (1970b) and Hopper's (1972) studies highlight the necessity for Standard English.

Dialect is a class marker in many societies. In America, Black English Vernacular stigmatizes its speaker. The current social milieu requires that the black, who wishes to gain access to higher levels of education, management and the professions, demonstrate linguistic conformity.

Political Aspects of Black English Vernacular

Black intellectuals in the militant movement are interested in maintaining BEV for political reasons. They feel that it is a symbol of the black person's endurance under pressure. It is a cohesive device that expresses the ineffable, "soul." It establishes a bond among speakers. It is a style marker. An illustration of the galvanizing power of language is contained in the experience of the Futio people of Brazil. (Hymes 1970) They preserved their group identity for over three

centuries by giving up their territory to maintain their language.

The move toward racial solidarity among black intellectuals is highlighted in the use of Black English Vernacular in modern black literature. Langston Hughes "Old Jim Crow" in Simple Speaks His Mind illustrates this usage. (Hughes 1958, p. 190) Other features of BEV are apparent in Jacques Wakefield's poem, "it ain't no jive" (Wakefield 1973, p. 211) and Sonia Sanchez' "Right on: white america!" (Sanchez 1973, p. 368) Additional poets and writers of note who celebrate the use of BEV include LeRoi Jones, Gwendolyn Brooks, Don L. Lee, June Jordan, Ted Joans, Margaret Walker, Nikki Giovanni, Gil Scott, Mae Jackson, David Henderson, Michael Harper, Paul Murray, Zora Neale Hurston, Ernest Gaines, Ishmael Ried. Geneva Smitherman is writing a book entitled, "Black Idiom." Her lectures at Harvard University are often in Black English.

These black artists are using language as a political and cultural tool to build cultural pride. They are doing for the blacks what leaders of other ethnic groups have done, building an ethnic awareness in what, they hope, will become a pluralistic rather than a

"melting-pot" society.

Language Diversity - A Summary

Interest in the hypothesis that the poverty child, and especially the black non-standard speaking child, is different rather than deficient has centered around his linguistic competence. Researchers such as Labov and Shuy found that BEV speaking children are able to express cognitive processes adequately in their dialect.

BEV, like other dialects, is a dialect system that meets the needs of its users and differs from neighboring dialects in one or more of its constituent areas - phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Although its differences occur mainly in surface structure, there are some deep structural variants, principally the durative "be"; ex., "I be home" - a continuing process rather than a momentary condition. BEV is most common among blacks who live in social isolation in large urban ghettos. Some linguistic phenomena which affect it are: dialect swamping; differentiation according to age and sex; the prestige which accrues from various forms of linguistic display; and dialect switching.

Among the existing theories of the origin of BEV: archaic European roots, minstrel shows, effects of

physiognomy on language production, and African roots; the one that proposes an African genesis seems to have the most validity. Linguistic origin, notwithstanding, the speaker of BEV is subject to social stigma. The current social milieu requires that the black, who wishes to gain access to higher levels of education, management and the professions, demonstrate linguistic conformity. The exception to this social requirement is the black artist or intellectual who advocates the use of BEV as an instrument of black cultural pride in what, he/she hopes, will become a culturally pluralistic society.

Acceptance of some form of the "deficient hypothesis" requires a remedy that compensates for the deficiency. It would be near sighted to overlook the socially induced deficiencies which result from relegating a group to an inferior status; it is astigmatic to assign a substandard tag to linguistic differences which are capable of carrying complex cognitive operations, but which may be responsible for unsatisfactory academic achievement.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Among those change agents whose aim is compensatory education, compensation for a deficiency, proposals range from providing alternate forms of learning geared to a group's supposed area of cognitive strength to removing the child from his environment, to modification of maternal teaching styles, to compensation for learning readiness deficits through pre-school programs, to TV readiness teaching. Those who analyze the educational establishment, propose a concerted effort to improve instructional quality and upgrade expectations for achievement. Social reformers recognize the benefits of integrated schooling.

Others who base their thinking in Bernstein's theory of "restricted code," opt for intensive language training before attempting to teach children to read.

If the thesis of linguistic difference and its implied equality is accepted, it makes sense to look to language for solutions to educational problems which focus on the teaching of reading. Gleitman and Rozen bypassed dialect through the use of a logographic system, a logo represents a syllable, for beginning reading. (See Appendix A) Baratz and Stewart favor the use of beginning reading material written in dialect to avoid a linguistic mis-

match. Shuy proposes concentration on morphology and syntax that bypasses specific linguistic differences; while Goodman advises that dialect-based oral reading miscues be considered appropriate renditions of standard language. Attention to the learner's motivation and some techniques for teaching of second languages need also be reviewed before considering an alternate approach to beginning reading proposed by this study, the language-experience approach. It is a beginning reading method which utilizes a child's own language for the writing of his/her beginning-to-read stories.

"Deficient" Hypothesis

Home Environment

Withdrawal of the child. Many educational programs called "compensatory" aim to make up for supposed deficiencies of early experience. One of the most radical was proposed by Bruno Bettelheim. ("Psychologist," New York Times, March 17, 1967) He questioned the value of remedial training while ties with the ghetto environment persist. His experience with a group of disadvantaged Yemenite Israeli children raised in a children's house on a Kibbutz indicated that their progress was superior to the control group raised by the parents at home. He

advocated doing the same for American ghetto children so that they could absorb the skills needed for academic achievement rather than those needed for their "jungle environment."[2] Among the glaring difficulties of this scheme, which has been criticized for being racist, is the notion that it would be possible to remove children from their homes, to be raised elsewhere. In Israel it is standard practice among groups who have devised this arrangement themselves and desire it for their children. The children are raised in separate children's houses, but these houses are an integral part of the Kibbutz community. Bettelheim's scheme would impose a solution.

Modification of home environment. Programs designed to improve maternal teaching styles have met with mixed success. Trained workers visit impoverished houses of pre-schoolers to "play" together with the mother and the child in ways that will further lingual and conceptual readiness. Wargo, Campear, and Tallmade (1971) found that only 3.1 percent of 326 programs were considered successful. Among the successful programs, substantial I.Q. gains on a Stanford-Binet I.Q. test were made by the treatment group in comparison with the control group. Thirty months later there was some regression, but a substantial increment held. The personnel needed for widespread availability of such an individual service is a substantial drawback. It would appear that the home visitors

need to be well qualified in order to succeed.

Compensatory Pre-School Programs

The Ypsilanti Perry Pre-School Project directed by David Weikart was organized so that teachers planned work very carefully, did intense thinking about each child and participated in project decision making. They also visited each child's home for 90 minutes once every two weeks. Three different teaching approaches produced uniform substantial gains in comparison to a "no-treatment" group. (Weikart 1970)

A compensatory program designed by Martin Deutsch is detailed in Powledge. (1967) It was carefully formulated to teach elementary cognitive concepts and enrich environmental offerings for pre-schoolers from deprived homes.

"Headstart" was a much heralded and well funded federal program designed to compensate for learning readiness deficits. One of the principal criticisms of this effort was the wide difference in quality among the groups. Westinghouse Learning Corporation and Ohio University evaluated the program in 1969. (Westinghouse 1970) They found that children who attended the full year program showed a slight but statistically significant difference from a control group on a Metropolitan Readiness Test. Summer programs were not at all effective. Smith and Bissell (1970)

were critical of the Westinghouse study on the basis that the match of experimental and control children was poor. Minimal success has been the reason given for the phasing out of some Headstart programs. Many continue to operate in urban centers.

Television Programs

The Carnegie Corporation has invested large sums to teach children language and conceptual skills through the TV medium. The programs, Sesame Street and Electric Company, are highly innovative and utilize inner city surroundings. Educational Testing Service has reported significant gains in the skills taught. (Cass 1970) Other studies questioned these results. Research based on "Sesame Street" revealed that exposure did not significantly affect school achievement in later grades. (Sprigle 1971) The passive nature of television viewing, which does not easily allow the participation important to learning might partially explain Springle's finding. It is of interest to note that a steady diet of TV viewing of standard English presentation does not appear to change the speech pattern of young non-standard speaking viewers.

School Integration

No discussion of solutions to the educational dilemma we face would be complete without mention of school

integration. In 1954 the Supreme Court decided that segregated schools for blacks were unequal. The Coleman Report's evidence indicates that there is a tendency for the performance of black students to increase as the proportion of white students increases. (Coleman 1966, p. 311) Jencks cautions that true integration is a different matter from desegregation and that socio-economic desegregation is equally important. His collected information indicates that desegregation which continues over a long period of time raises black students' scores slightly. (Jencks 1972, p. 101)

Improved Instruction

Coleman (1966), Harris, Cohen and Cooper (1972), Hutchins (1973), and Rystrom (1972) have come to the conclusion that the most important element in student achievement is the quality of the teacher. Coleman's opinion was based on his extensive study for HEW; Harris' on work he did in a New York City "CRAFT" project in 1968 when more than the usual teacher training and supervision went into reading programs; Hutchins' on the basis of his reported strengthening of the New York City instructional program which resulted in improved reading scores this year. There is no doubt that a concerted effort needs to be made to promote quality teaching and to exploit all carefully conceived possibilities.

Intensive Language Training

The leading proponents of the thesis that teaching a dialect speaking child standard speech patterns is necessary before he begins to read are Carl Bereiter and Sigfried Engleman. Their additional thesis is that teaching a dialect speaking child standard language patterns is teaching him to think logically and abstractly. Their proposition is grounded in Bernstein's code theory.

Engleman (Bereiter and Engleman 1966) concluded, after observing four year old poverty children, that they did not understand word meanings that were tied to concepts. A highly structured, behaviorist approach is applied to learning small components which build to generic classifications. All children do the same thing. This follows the time honored principle, "whether you need milk of magnesia or not, you get it." Another flaw in the approach is the arbitrary nature of the program designers' decisions. No allowance is made for inhibitions fostered by an imposing and highly directive adult presence.

Rystrom (1972) found that the more intensive the language training, the more it interfered with learning to read. Experience has demonstrated that excessive amounts of time are required, resulting in little

progress. Vernacular persists because of peer group influence.

The notion of linguistic inadequacy is often attached to the pre-school, black ghetto child. Labov has demonstrated in The Logic of Non-Standard English (1970a) that these children can display a great deal of verbosity. Analysis of the speech samples of twenty black, pre-school, Headstart children revealed that they were not delayed in language acquisition, in spite of their economic deprivation. The following are some of the transformations they used:

Negation	She can't go outside.
Question	Don't you know about it?
Contraction	Duh daddy's not gonna see dem.
Inversion	When it's hot outside come back in uh house
	etc.

If these children can master the complex imbedding skills displayed in their syntax, is it logical to suppose that they would have excessive difficulty with elementary generalizations?

"Different" Hypothesis

Proposals for Teaching Reading and Language

Reports of reading failure in the New York City inner city are illustrative of the situations in other inner cities. They have stimulated reading specialists and linguists to look for solutions to the problem. Gleitman and Rosen propose the initial use of logograms for syllables; (see Appendix A) Goodman prefers acceptance of dialect involved miscues for standard forms; Shuy advocates avoidance of the principal sources of dialect interference; and Baratz and Stewart have written beginning-to-read materials in dialect. This study advocates the use of a child's idiolect, his characteristic speech pattern, to formulate his own reading materials.

Some educational problems which arise in regard to dialect and the teaching of reading focus on community reactions to BEV reading materials. Others are concerned with motivation for all learning, but most particularly reading and learning standard language as a second language.

The following discussion will concern itself with the abovementioned range of solutions.

Logograms. Second grade inner city children who had been unable to read were quickly taught by Gleitman and Rozen (1973) using thirty characters in a logographic system. (see Appendix A for an example of this system) While this might have motivational appeal as a new beginning, excessive emphasis on the syllable can conceivably disorient a child if the words are not divided for him. In addition, in order to be able to divide a word, it is very often necessary to be able to read the word first.

Acceptance of Dialect Based Miscues. Goodman is the chief proponent of the alternative that oral dialect reading of standard materials is acceptable. He found that speakers of BEV can be proficient readers, and that speakers of BEV did not use it consistently for oral reading. (Goodman and Buck 1973) Cazden (1972) also noted considerable dialect switching. Goodman's dialect miscue proposal has met with more acceptance among educators and laymen than other suggestions.

There are some important implications arising from Goodman's work. 1) Those readers who used some BEV

in their oral reading were performing a high-level task. They were demonstrating that they understood deep meaning sufficiently to translate it to BEV. 2) They demonstrated a grasp of the appropriateness of standard language behavior by making an attempt to switch. When retelling a story, however, their attention to meaning diverted their attention from standard form and their speech became more natural. 3) Lack of consistency in use of either the speaker's or the reader's dialect is evidence of the linguistic insecurity Labov discusses in The Social Stratification of English in New York City. (1966) 4) Since less proficient readers did show more dialect involvement, further analysis of the problem of the lower level readers is indicated. Goodman's own statement, (1973, p. 11) "It does not show that dialect difference or dialect rejection is not a cause of difficulty in learning to read" leaves some room for the possibility of a dialectal etiology even though it leaves no further room for the use of the negative. 5) It has the distinct advantage of meeting with acceptance among educators and laymen, an important consideration for future adoption.

In their investigation, Cohen and Cooper (1972) concluded that most studies underestimate the verbal

repertoire of black poverty children and that they certainly have sufficient vocabulary to handle beginning reading material written in standard form.

By-Passing Interfering Grammatical Forms. Shuy (1970a) found that intermediate grade children were more likely to make oral reading errors on smaller grammatical differences rather than grosser differences. The following forms were the principal offenders:

Written Expression	Linguistic Feature	Oral Expression
1. John's house	possession	John house
2. John runs	3rd sing. pres.	John run
3. ten cents	plurality	ten cent
4. He jumped	past	He jump
5. She is a cook	copula	She a cook

He appears to favor beginning to read materials which minimize dialect differences.

Beginning-to-Read Books in Dialect. Dialect readers are based on the assumption that there is a sufficient mismatch between the child's language and the author's language to create difficulty. The leading proponents of dialect readers are Baratz and Stewart.

Stewart (1964) provided evidence that shed light on why learning standard language may be more

difficult for non-standard speakers than foreign language speakers. Liberians who spoke an African vernacular had less trouble learning English than those who spoke Liberian Pidgin. The dialect closest to the standard produced the most interference. Similar mechanisms may make it difficult for the non-standard speaker to learn to read standard forms.

Stewart (1969) further details Osterberg's experience with dialect speaking Swedish children. Those who learned to read the Swedish dialect first and then switched to reading standard materials did better than controls who began learning to read in standard Swedish.

If Lambert's experience (1972) teaching French Canadian children bi-lingually can serve as a model, children who first learn the mother tongue and then go on to learn the prestige tongue achieve as well in reading and speaking the prestige language as those who learn it from the beginning.

However, there is some conflicting evidence on this issue. Venezky (1970) admits that a dialect approach offers ego support but he reports that a group of Mexican children taught in their own language did not do significantly better than those taught in the conventional way. Furthermore, existence of several dialects could necessitate preparing materials in each. He concludes that it

would be wise to minimize dialect differences.

Language-Experience Stories for Beginning Reading. The language-experience approach to beginning reading capitalizes on a child's linguistic, conceptual and emotional stage of development. His own language, anchored to his conceptual and emotional framework, forms the base for his stories. His stories serve as a bond between his thoughts and words. They are recorded by an adult at first, to be copied by the child. The adult and child read them together until the child is ready to read parts or the whole alone. The method has proved effective for beginning reading, especially with disadvantaged children. Ruddell (1974) and Jaggar (1974) propose recording the syntax of a child's idiolect. There are no studies available to date to assess its value. There is no record available to date of the use of tape-recorded conversations for experience stories, either. Further inquiry into the use of transcribed conversations under varying conditions appears to be warranted.

Problems in Relation to Dialect and the Teaching of Reading.

Community resistance. The question of the use of dialect in reading material has met with enormous community resistance. Some blacks feel that it perpetuates

a stereotype. The NAACP has taken the official position that use of BEV in schools would lock children into a provincial patois that limits opportunities. Zale (1972) stated that linguistic differentiation on the basis of social class is a racist conceptualization. The controversy stimulated DeStefano (1971) to conduct a pilot study of attitudes. Using an extremely small sample, she found opinion split in regard to the value of dialect as an expression of black culture; allowing BEV to be used in the classroom; and including the study of BEV in the school curriculum. All felt that beginning reading materials should be in Standard English. The fact that no school system, at this time, has adopted BEV readers, in spite of the widespread use of BEV, is an indication of the amount of resistance they encounter. Cazden (1972) polled groups of black parents, teachers and leaders in Roxbury, a ghetto section of Boston, Massachusetts. The parents felt that Black English had no place in the school. Teachers and aides felt that survival in a white culture required Standard English. Community leaders were more sympathetic to the use of Black English as a tool of psychological survival and group solidarity. They questioned the myth of the need for Standard English in order to succeed. The political orientation of these leaders was not mentioned. One might infer that they were militant.

Much of the resistance to BEV in the schools stems from the aspirations people have. Labov (1966) found that the educational goals for adult blacks are the same as the rest of society. They were almost unanimous in their goals for correct speech and language teaching in the schools. Obviously, these goals (which agreed with Roxbury teachers' conclusions) are based on the assumption that one needs to speak the standard dialect in order to qualify for upward mobility. The aim of this upward mobility is likely to be the American success stereotype of increased material consumption, power, and prestige.

The report of Shuy's (1970b) and Hopper et al.'s (1972) research indicates that the need for standardized speech is grounded in reality. Appropriate speech patterns are important to those hiring for higher job categories.

The Learner's Motivation

Another important aspect of the situation which needs to be considered is the motivation the BEV speaker has for learning the standard form. We are faced with the phenomenon of ghetto children listening to standard speech on television and throughout their school lives. Yet, they retain their own distinctive patterns. It may be argued that the passive nature of the listening in these situations inhibits learning. It may also be argued,

on the basis of what we know of child language acquisition, that modelling occupies a minor place in the learning process. There remains the strong possibility that a person may have a value system that causes him to cling to his dialect. Language learners are strongly influenced by their group associations.

Furthermore, group membership may depend on language conformity. Let us assume that a first grader models his speech on that of his teacher. The rest of the class begins to regard him as an outcast. He has paid a very high price for his new found skill - the price of social ostracism. Others, who are more conforming, will want to retain their vernacular.

During a study preliminary to a proposed larger study, Labov and Robbins (1969) found that 43 South Harlem gang members were very much behind a 32 member vacation day camp group from the same area in spite of observed proficiency in verbal skills. They drew a strong conclusion that the values of the peer group exerted an intense pressure that was anti-education. They further concluded that college educated teachers are inadequate for the job of working with members of the street culture; and they recommended the introduction of a cultural intermediary in the classroom to:

1. Acquaint teachers with interests of members of class and help design reading materials.
2. Provide effective rewards and punishments, as normal school sanctions are irrelevant.
3. Lead group discussion on topics of immediate concern.
4. Lead in sports and recreation.
5. Maintain contact outside school and organize extra curricular activities. (Labov and Robbins 1969, p. 167)

This novel suggestion is based on empirical evidence and addresses itself forthrightly to an extremely pressing problem.

Lambert's study of English and French Canadian subjects concluded that a person's success in language learning depended on motivation and attitude. "Learner's ethnocentric tendencies regulate or control his motivation to learn and ultimately his success or failure in mastering the new language." (Lambert 1972, p. 291)

According to Labov's findings (1964), youngsters at the age of fourteen or fifteen become aware of language as a tool for social mobility. It would seem that, if they are to learn the standard dialect, this would be an ideal time. Mantell's study (1974) concluded that the ages of ten to twelve are suitable. Golden (1964) found that high school age children who used tapes to learn Standard

English did twice as well as a control group that read the same material from scripts.

There are proposals to teach English as a second language to Black English Vernacular speaking youngsters in elementary school. That is, the beginning curriculum would utilize dialect, but include direct instruction in the use of standard forms. Johnson (1970) cautions that when this is done, English be taught as an alternate, rather than a replacement dialect.

There are teachers who accept dialect in a classroom and allow dialect renditions of standard materials. They, nevertheless, recognize the importance of mastering standard language so that a child may have access to upward mobility.

Cullinan, Jaggar and Strickland (1974) report success through the use of dramatics, role-playing, choral speaking, discussions and patterned practice in the primary grades. Mantell (1971) developed ingeneous strategies for applying the results of contrastive analysis to interesting patterned practices. Both appear to borrow from the constrastive analysis and patterned practice strategies for TESL which are outlined in Lado. (1964)

Ability to learn Standard English has a direct relationship to a person's dominant language and cultural

motivation. When one is surrounded by a particular language pattern, one is influenced by it. There has to be a strong, internalized reason for changing it. Schools don't seem to provide this motivation for all people. Some see language "weaning" as a seduction from the group's cultural core.

The controversy regarding Black English, its validity as a dialect, its genesis, its social and political ramifications, has probably just begun to surface. In the face of this controversy the conscientious educator who seeks solutions to the reading problems in the inner city, cannot afford to overlook the implications Black English Vernacular has for children who are learning to read. If it is a component of reading difficulty, there is the possibility that student created reading materials will incorporate children's natural language patterns and avoid linguistic mismatch.

SUMMARY

Proposals involved with compensatory education, compensation for a deficiency, range from removing the child from his environment, to modification of maternal teaching styles, to compensation for learning readiness deficits

through pre-school programs, to TV readiness teaching. Those who analyze the educational establishment propose a concerted effort to improve instructional quality and upgrade expectations for achievement. Social reformers recognize the benefits of integrated schooling.

Others who base their thinking in Bernstein's theory of "restricted code" opt for intensive language training. The child is taught standard form before learning to read standard form. (Bereiter and Englemann 1966) Attempts to do this have had limited results. (Labov 1970, Rystrom 1972, and Baratz 1969)

If the thesis of linguistic difference and its implied equality is accepted, it makes sense to look to language for solutions to educational problems which focus on the teaching of reading. Gleitman and Rozen bypassed dialect through the use of a logographic system, a logo represents a syllable, for beginning reading. (See Appendix A) Baratz and Stewart favor the use of beginning reading material written in dialect to avoid a linguistic mismatch. Shuy proposes concentration on morphology and syntax that bypasses specific linguistic differences; while Goodman advises that dialect-based oral reading miscues be considered appropriate renditions of standard reading material. Attention to the learner's motivation and some tech-

niques for teaching of second languages need also be considered. An analysis of an alternate approach to beginning reading, language-experience stories which capitalize on the child's idiolect, can conceivably change the educational practice of teachers who are aware of the nature, genesis, social and political implications of Black English Vernacular.

The concerned educator seeks educational remedies for pressing problems, but retains a broad view of their social scope. It is extremely important that a reviewer of research or an educational innovator remember that a proposed remedy is just that - one remedy among a number of possibilities.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Personal communication with Bruce Shields, November, 1973.

2. Bettelheim's designation, not this author's.

APPENDIX A

(i)

WILL|Y WILL YELL

4 FOR YELL|O CAN|DY .

(ii)

SAND|Y THE HAND|Y|MAN IS

GETT|ING THE CAN|O|PEN|ER

OUT|SIDE ON THE WIND|OW|SILL

SAMPLES OF WRITING FROM SYLLABARY BY GLEITMAN, ET AL.